

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 1231
www.gov.uk/ofsted



26 March 2020

Rachel Gallyot
Interim Headteacher
Kings Sutton Primary School
Richmond Street
Kings Sutton
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX17 3RT

Dear Mrs Gallyot

Special measures monitoring inspection of Kings Sutton Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 February 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in June 2019.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The trust's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that the school may appoint newly qualified teachers.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Northamptonshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Henson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in June 2019.

- Urgently address the weaknesses in the school's safeguarding systems by ensuring that:
 - the arrangements for safeguarding and safer recruitment meet statutory requirements
 - the designated safeguarding leader maintains full and accurate records of safeguarding concerns
 - staff understand their responsibility to safeguard pupils
 - the trust checks the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding and safer recruitment arrangements.
- Improve the impact of leadership and governance, by:
 - establishing a clear and robust plan for school improvement which focuses on raising standards for pupils
 - evaluating the impact of funding for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils to ensure that this funding is used effectively to raise standards for these pupils
 - supporting middle leaders to enable them to bring about improvements to their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain
 - evaluating the use of the PE and sport premium
 - creating an environment in which the staff, governors and the trust work collaboratively to raise standards for pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that the assessment of pupils throughout the school is used effectively to plan pupils' next steps in learning
 - providing opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills
 - ensuring that the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and early reading is effective to enable pupils to make strong progress
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are ambitious and appropriate to pupils' abilities, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring that teachers have high expectations of pupils' handwriting and standards of presentation.

- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by ensuring that:
 - all staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and applying the school's behaviour policy consistently, including when dealing with issues of bullying
 - staff promote positive attitudes to learning
 - pupils understand the importance of equality, diversity and tolerance.
- Improve the quality of education in the early years by ensuring that:
 - staff have a secure understanding of assessment information and use this to prepare children for Year 1
 - staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 26 and 27 February 2020

Evidence

I observed the school's work and scrutinised documents, including those related to safeguarding. I met with senior leaders, subject leaders, the early years leader and the interim special educational needs coordinator (SENCo). I met the chair of the Prime7 Multi Academy Trust, as well as the interim chair and members from the interim executive board. I met groups of parents and carers, staff and pupils. I scrutinised samples of pupils' work and observed playtimes and lunchtimes.

Context

Following the previous inspection, the governing body was disbanded. The chief executive officer (CEO) and the headteacher are no longer employed by the trust.

The trust has appointed an interim CEO, who supports the school as an interim headteacher for three days per week. A member of staff has been appointed as acting head of school. An interim executive board, known as a rapid improvement board, has been put in place, with an interim chair.

One member of staff is on maternity leave and one member of staff has been appointed on a temporary basis to cover this. One teaching assistant has been appointed. An interim SENCo has been seconded from another school for one day per week.

The progress made by the school in tackling the key areas for improvement identified at the section 5 inspection

Leaders have established a well-organised curriculum for teaching phonics. All staff have had training recently. Leaders have made sure that the books that children have to read match the sounds that they know. They make sure that pupils who need help to catch up get it. Leaders check that this is beginning to make a difference and that pupils are starting to catch up. However, this curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. Some elements of the teaching of phonics are not yet consistent. Leaders have plans in place to support staff further.

The new curriculum for reading and writing is organised so that pupils will be able to build on what they have learned before. Leaders have raised staff's expectations of what pupils can do. They have helped teachers to plan work which develops pupils' writing skills. In some classes, this provides pupils with the chance to practise the skills that they are gaining. However, not all teachers adapt this curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are catching up.

There is now a clear plan in place to develop handwriting. Some pupils take pride in their work and try hard to improve their presentation. However, expectations are not yet consistently high throughout the school. There is now a long-term plan in place to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Subject leaders know what they want pupils to learn. In some subjects, such as physical education (PE), leaders have made changes to what is taught so that pupils will be able to build on the skills that they are learning. Leaders have begun to evaluate the difference that the PE and sport funding is making, but this is at an early stage.

Leaders have established a curriculum for the teaching of personal, social and health education. They have planned assemblies so that pupils can learn about fundamental British values. Pupils know what democracy is and can explain how pupils were part of choosing the school council. They can explain how voting is used to make decisions. Pupils have begun to learn about equality. They know that 'everyone should be treated equally, but not everyone is the same'. They demonstrate respect for different religions. However, their understanding of values such as tolerance is limited. Staff plan for pupils to find out about different cultures through music, art and religious education.

There is now a clear, whole-school approach to managing pupils' behaviour. This is closely monitored by leaders so that they can identify any patterns in behaviour. They act quickly on this information. Pupils understand the new behaviour system. They say that there are fewer disruptions to their learning. In lessons, most pupils are attentive and keen to learn. However, pupils think that behaviour could be better. They do not feel that all staff use the new behaviour system in the same way.

Pupils say that they feel safer in school than they did previously. They feel that adults take seriously any concerns about bullying. They can name their 'safety network' of five adults that they could speak to if they had a problem. They say that recent initiatives, such as the anti-bullying programme, have made a difference. Pupils can explain the difference between bullying and 'falling out'. However, pupils think that there is still more work to do so that all pupils understand how to treat each other kindly all the time.

Children have settled into the early years well. They enjoy using the different areas of the classroom and outdoor area. They are confident and articulate individuals with positive attitudes to learning. They cooperate with each other and are keen to read words around the classroom that they know.

Leaders have made sure that staff in early years have had training about assessment. They record what pupils can do accurately. However, they do not always use this information well enough to plan what children should learn next. Activities which pupils go to independently do not always provide the chance for pupils to practise what they know or to think more deeply.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Leaders have ensured that the school's vision of 'achieve, inspire, respect' is understood and shared by all. Leaders and governors have met with parents regularly to explain the changes that are being made. They have organised surveys to find out the views of pupils and parents. Leaders have acted on concerns raised. They have worked closely with the school council to find out whether pupils think that what they are doing is making a difference. Staff feel well supported and morale is strong.

There is a clear plan in place to improve the school. This is based on the areas needing improvement identified at the previous inspection. Leaders have prioritised these appropriately. They have provided high-quality training for staff. They check that this is effective and making a difference. Subject leaders are being trained. They are beginning to help staff teach their subjects better.

Leaders have improved how the needs of pupils with SEND are identified. Assessments are now more accurate and identify specifically what pupils have not yet understood.

The trust has established a 'rapid improvement board' led by an experienced interim chair. The trust and the interim chair have provided some training for new members of this board. More is planned. They have made sure that safeguarding has improved. The trust has recruited more governors who will join the local governing body when it is re-established. Governors are motivated and visit the school to check on the changes that leaders are making. However, they are at an early stage of understanding their roles and responsibilities.

Comprehensive audits identified what leaders needed to do to make sure that all pupils are safe in school. Leaders have made sure that all staff understand the importance of safeguarding and the risks that pupils face in the local area. They have checked that what staff teach the pupils prepares them to be safe when they are online and in other situations that they might meet.

Leaders act promptly on the concerns that staff raise. Record-keeping is systematic and detailed. Staff and governors have now undertaken training about safer recruitment. Leaders have made sure that they understand their training. Governors check that the actions that leaders have taken, such as improving the security of the site, manage risks appropriately.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Leaders know what the school is doing better and what it still needs to do. They check the difference that the changes are making. They have a clear and systematic plan in place to improve the school further.

- Leaders have improved teachers' knowledge of what pupils need to learn to be ready for the next stage in their learning. They meet staff regularly to check that pupils are making progress. Leaders and teachers are beginning to evaluate the extra help that pupils get. They check that this is making a difference and helping pupils to catch up. Communication between staff is strong.
- Leaders have prioritised improving the quality of education in English and mathematics. They have also established a broad and balanced curriculum. They have made sure that all national curriculum subjects are now taught throughout the school.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- The trust has made appointments which have strengthened the leadership of the school. However, these are temporary. They have not yet established substantive positions.
- Teachers now understand that they are responsible for the progress of all pupils in their class, including those with SEND. However, leaders have not made sure that all staff understand how to adapt the curriculum to support pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.
- A review of the use of the pupil premium has been arranged but has not yet taken place. There is a new plan in place, but it is at an early stage of implementation. Leaders have not yet evaluated the impact in detail.
- The trust has not yet ensured that there are appropriate systems in place to hold leaders fully to account. They have not yet put in place systems to check that the information that school leaders tell them is accurate.

External support

Leaders have made effective use of support from the English hub. They have received support from other local schools which has been brokered by the trust.